

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 1633

EXDIS

FOR COUNSELOR SONNENFELDT AND ASST SECRETARY HARTMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HU

SUBJ: CARE AND FEEDING OF FERENC ESZTERGALYOS

REF: BUDAPEST 1461

1. SINCE MY ARRIVAL HERE IN LATE APRIL I HAVE HAD FIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET AND TALK WITH AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE FERENC ESZTERGALYOS AT LENGTH. AS A RESULT I HAVE FORMED CERTAIN OPINIONS OF HIM PERSONALLY AND OF THE MISSION HE WILL UNDERTAKE IN WASHINGTON.
 2. ESZTERGALYOS IS URBANE, SOPHISTICATED, OUTGOING, AN ABLE DIPLOMAT, RESPECTED BY WESTERN DIPLOMATS WHOSE AFFAIRS HE HAS HANDLED IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE (AUSTRIAN, SWISS, SWEDISH, NORWEGIAN AMBASSADORS HERE). HE HAS GOOD POLICE AND PARTY CONNECTIONS AND IS HIGHLY REGARDED BY HIS FOREIGN OFFICE COLLEAGUES. I NOTICE, HOWEVER, THAT HE APPEARS TO BE OVERLY DEFERENTIAL TO DEPUTY FONMIN JANOS NAGY. THAT, OF COURSE, IS PROBABLY EXPLAINED BY NAGY'S EXPERIENCE IN WASHINGTON IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT PAST AND BY THE FACT THAT NAGY IS ESZTERGALYOS' DIRECT SUPERIOR.
 3. ESZTERGALYOS, WHO HAS HAD NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN U.S., HAS MADE IT CLEAR HE AIMS TO "WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE" IN WASHINGTON. HE WOULD LIKE TO RECOVER AS QUICKLY
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AS POSSIBLE SOME OF THE GROUNDLOST UNDER THE SZABO REGIME.

HE WILL CENTER HIS ATTENTION PARTICULARLY ON THE CONGRESS AND ON THE UPPER LEVELS OF STATE, COMMERCE AND AGRICULTURE. HE WAS PARTICULARLY ATTENTIVE TO DEPUTY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE CAMPBELL DURING HIS RECENT VISIT (MAY 25-28) AND TO CONGRESSMAN WHELAN OF HOUSE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE DURING HIS VISIT LAST APRIL.

4. ESZTERGALYOS ALSO WISHES TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE WASHINGTON TO EXTENT HE CAN BEFORE RETURNING TO BUDAPEST IN MID-JULY. FOR INSTANCE, HE PLANS ON WEEKEND AFTER HIS ARRIVAL TO GO TO NEW YORK TO PAY A VISIT TO AMBASSADOR HOLLAI AT UN, AND CONSUL GENERAL FULOP. HE SAYS HE PLANS TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT STAFF OF EMBASSY AND UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE MAKING SOME CHANGES. ONE LIKELY CHANGE WILL BE ADDITION OF A CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICER (HE SAYS ONE OFFICER CURRENTLY HANDLES BOTH PRESS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS), RATIONALE FOR THIS BEING THAT ESZTERGALYOS THINKS CULTURAL FIELD BEST LENDS ITSELF TO MORE EFFECTIVE CONTACTS ON AMERICAN SCENE. IN SHORT, FROM TIME OF HIS ARRIVAL UNTIL HE RETURNS IN JULY ESZTERGALYOS WILL BE ON A PROXANG MISSION. HE OBVIOUSLY HOPES TO BE ABLE, ON THE BASIS OF HIS FINDINGS DURING THAT PERIOD, TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS RE POLICY TOWARDS THE U.S. TO HIGHEST FOREIGN POLICY SACHEMS DURING JULY REVIEW OF HUNGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND TO GET THEIR APPROVAL FOR SPECIFIC PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS--ESPECIALLY IN THE INITIAL PHASE CULTURAL ONES

5. I BELIEVE IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO FACILITATE ESZTERGALYOS ON HIS MISSION OF EXPLORATION. THE MAN IS MENTALLY ALIVE AND INTELLECTUALLY CURIOUS; AND HE HAS AN EXCELLENT COMMAND OF ENGLISH. EASY ACCESS TO VARIOUS LEVELS IN THE DEPT (INCLUDING SELECTED SENIOR ONES) CAN HELP SHAPE HIS THINKING AT A FORMATIVE TIME. HOPEFULLY DEPT WILL ALSO ASSIST HIM TO THE EXTENT FEASIBLE IN MAKING PROPER REPEAT PROPER CONTACTS IN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES AND ELSEWHERE. AT THIS STAGE I SUGGEST USG OFFICIALS LISTEN QUIETLY AND ATTENTIVELY TO WHAT HE HAS TO SAY, AND ANSWER HIS MANY QUESTIONS WARMLY AND AT LENGTH BUT IN NON-SPECIFIC CONFIDENTIAL

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TERMS. ONE WOULD EXPECT ESZTERGALYOS TO CONFER IN DEPT JUST BEFORE HIS SCHEDULED RETURN TO BUDAPEST (HOPEFULLY HE WILL HAVE PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS BY THEN) AT WHICH TIME ONE OR BOTH OF YOU MIGHT SEEK TO DETERMINE WHAT CONCLUSIONS HE HAS DRAWN FROM HIS BREIF SOJOURN IN THE U.S. AND WHAT HE IS PREPARED TO RECOMMEND TO BUDAPEST. IN SHORT, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW HUNGARY'S IMMEDIATE AND MID-TERM OBJECTIVES IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AS HE SEES THEM.

6. MEANWHILE THE "COUNTRY BOY" WILL CONTINUE TO ASK INNOCENT QUESTIONS HERE IN BUDAPEST. AT SOME POINT BETWEEN NOW AND ESZTERGALYOS' RETURN IN MID-JULY I INTEND TO ACCEPT FOREIGN MINISTER PUJA'S OFFER TO SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS WITH HIM ONE BY ONE THOSE ISSUES WHICH MAKE U.S.-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS SUB-NORMAL (BUDAPEST 1250). BY PROBING IN THIS FASHION THERE AND HERE WE MAY BE ABLE TO SHAPE A PRIORITY LIST REPEAT LIST SATISFACTORY TO BOTH PARTIES. THEN ONE CAN BEGIN TO GO ABOUT THE TASK OF RESOLVING INDIVIDUAL ISSUES IN AN ORDERLY WAY AND IN A RATIONAL TIME SEQUENCE WITH A VIEW TO REALLY EXPANDING AND IMPROVING OUR RELATIONS AT A PROPER PACE AND WITHOUT OVERLOADING THE INTERNATIONAL OR DOMESTIC CIRCUITS.
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